

THE

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LIBERIAN CRUSADE.

“ Paulum sepultæ distat inertie
“ Celata virtus.”

“ The total and absolute separation by an extensive space of water, or of land at least, of the white portion of our population from that which is free of the coloured.” *Address of the Hon. H. Clay to the Colonisation Society of Kentucky.*

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MDCCCXXIII.

THE LIBERIAN CRUSADE.

THERE is in America a Society called "The American Colonization Society," which proposes to remove, by the aid of voluntary funds, the free Black People of that country to Liberia, on the west coast of Africa, and as many of the American Slaves as can get their liberation. This Society has deputed E. Cresson, Esq., to beg in England for that object. The number of the American Slaves at the last census in 1832 was 2,009,050; of the free Blacks, 320,000; making a total of 2,329,050 candidates for Liberia,—in fact, a nation!

The condition of the *free* in America, is well told by two facts: the first, that the highest station to which any of them have risen, on the authority of an American, is a barber and a sail-maker; the second, that they are persecuted into willingness to emigrate to Liberia, as the Hon. H. Clay, an American, expresses it, by "prejudices more powerful than any laws (which) deny them the privileges of free men." The state of the Slaves in America appears to be *physically* better, but *morally* worse, than that of our own in the West Indies. The Americans feed them as they do their fine horses for sale and labour. But in Louisiana, in Georgia, and other States, not even a Sunday-school for their benefit is permitted, under a penalty of £500. for the first offence, death for the second. The Council-House of Savannah taxes every Black who enters that city: and in the Slave States it is penal to teach a Slave to read. This Colonization Society is supported in America by some of the benevolent from good motives; by the Slave-owners, from policy and fear of revenge; by the fashionable and ambitious, from hatred to the Blacks, whose skin emits a smell which it appears beats through all perfumes.

The income of the Society was last year about £8000. and in the following mode is some of it employed:—

An American Governor in Liberia,	£240.	per annum.
An American Physician,	200.	ditto.
Four Schoolmasters,	320.	ditto.
Superintendent,	80.	ditto.
An American Secretary in America,	240.	ditto.
His Clerk,	100.	ditto.
For Rents, Taxes, Printing, Stationery, } Porters, &c., &c., [I should think } insufficient,] }	250.	ditto.
Total		<u>£1430.</u>

Deducted from £8000., £6570. remain for the direct purposes of the Institution. There are now 3000 American Negroes in Liberia,

the cost of each of whom, with a settlement of land and some rations until after his first harvest, averages £8. per head. What the Society has received and how expended, are to me unknown; for printed documents are much too rare. Yet if the American Society have had a clear income of £6570. for *four years*, it might have conveyed 3281 Negroes,—a number exceeding by 281 those which are now in Liberia. But the Society has been in operation fifteen years: what did it then give for the slip of land called Liberia, and what are its expenses in addition to those for which we have accounted?

The Friends of this Institution propose by it to remove the unhappy, because coloured, though free, and slave population of America; to controul the African Slave-trade; and to benefit such of the Inhabitants as may seek alliances with the Liberians. The objections to this plan appear to me the following:—

I. It is impracticable. Remove nearly three millions of Blacks, in other words, a nation as large as Scotland, and by voluntary means! If the Americans wish their removal, as a State let them tax themselves to accomplish it, and not beg from us, whose charities will be shortly demanded for our own West-Indian Slaves, to whom our debt is all but infinite. Nothing but force *can* remove the Negroes from America: on some it will produce consent to go, when their courage and spirit are sufficiently tamed by cruelty. On others, force will operate reversely, and drive them into a sort of lazaroni, who will always elude the power of the States, but hold them in constant fear. How much wiser to locate them westwardly, and, if necessary, to keep them tributary, and thus convert them into friends.

II. The designs proposed by this Society are unjust. Sneers, neglect, abuse, unwillingness to employ or associate with, laws invidiously against the Black, are the christian means which persecute him into willingness to leave America. And on whom would they not so operate? On the same condition the Slave, whose increase alarms his master, is set at liberty. The Whites say, they are the owners of the soil, and determine therefore to expel the Blacks. What constitutes *their* right to the soil? Labour? Then the Blacks have the stronger claim. Defence of the country at the declaration of independence? Were the Blacks indifferent during the struggle? Were they not the forlorn hope, which none would regret, however voluntarily and bravely they marched to the walls? Is the right of the Americans constituted by having been British or American subjects? So were the Blacks. Oh! I am forgetting myself; it is established beyond all dispute,—ah, even to the conviction of the Slave himself,—that the right of the American is proved by his white skin, which, from being so evidently the result of his own choice or virtue, proves his right beyond pos-

sible invalidation! Oh, Memory! that thou couldst forget this reason.

III. The very general resistance of the Blacks themselves ought to crush, without delay or pity, the Liberian scheme.

In a late discussion in the Virginian House of Delegates the greatest difficulty was the undenied fact, that "few would voluntarily colonize," and the best practicable scheme of inducing the people of colour to *consent to exile*. If we did not know this, the frequent meetings which have taken place in New-York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, &c., where the Blacks protest against the invasion of their rights by this Society, and at which they declare that they mean to "live and die in the land of their forefathers," were sufficient to cool the unnatural heat of this philanthropico-mercantile crusade among the simple ones of our country, if they would either give themselves the trouble to *think* for five minutes, or have the modesty to prefer taking the thoughts of their own countrymen who *have thought* upon the subject, to those of strangers, whom they see but once in their lives, and over whom they have no controul.

IV. But the greatest objection to this scheme is, that it substantially encourages Slavery. It proposes the reverse; but my little child would not want informing, *while man can be any where bought or sold* (the *causa causarum* of Slavery), Slaves will be procured from the weakest; and though Africa were all round her coast lined with a ring of colonies, outdoing in pretensions the cheap and spurious kind of zeal of this American Society itself, the South Seas, and twenty other unprotected parts of the world, would soon ring with the Slaver's psaltery and harp, the whip and chains and collars and blusterings of the kidnapper. Shut up universally the market for man-trade,—make it death to hold a fellow-creature in Slavery,—and so long as this shall be the statute, a man-stealer would be unknown. I omit the manner in which this Society cants to the American Slavers, and panders to their lust of ill-gotten wealth, by the sanction of their claims, which, whether legal or moral, ought to be entirely denounced by all who aim at Emancipation.—See the Fourth Report of the Society.

V. The Colonizationists say, they cannot legislatively stir the question of Emancipation, and therefore resort to this scheme as a substitute. Why cannot they moot the general question of Slavery in the United States? Because very few of the Society are in Congress? or because it is against a fundamental law? What then, is there no way to influence the legislature, but through a Congressional discussion? Is not the public mind open to be informed, convicted, made self-indignant, ah, to hate itself for the toleration of this crime,—which will leave an unwashed spot on

the otherwise as yet whitest page of political history? Are there no men who, able, dare to lecture publicly through and through the United States, and most frequently where Slaves wear the heaviest chains? What is the pen, the heart, logic, poetry, eloquence, compassion, woman, and conversation doing in America, that they cannot stir the general legislative question of Slavery in the States, and originate the tide wave of popular displeasure against Slavery, and by their force drive it from all the extremities of the Union, ultimately and irresistibly, into the very House of Congress itself? What have we done in England on Reform, on Dissenting and Catholic questions? Why, we have pointed our *moral* force, a million times greater than our naval and military, towards the legislature, and have compelled power to listen to right, and authority to quail before reason; and we intend to do more, especially on Slave questions. Let Americans do likewise.

VI. We dislike the credentials of this Society, and the mode by which it advances its purposes. We have no general accounts of income, outlay, &c. All that I have seen,—and I have been eager after information,—consist of extracts from letters between Mr. Cresson and his friends; slips from needy newspapers, whose editors would leap their own height for a paragraph on any subject, from Jack the Giant-killer and forward. Such, with a few letters from sea-captains trading between Liberia and America, or American agents resident there, or even from the colonists themselves, are all very unsatisfactory documents. All persons in the employ of this Society, such as governors, physicians, agents, sea-captains, &c., are not likely to testify in disfavour of a scheme from which they derive temporary importance, if not bread. And how can any other than a favourable testimony be expected from the quondam Slaves? For who would not prefer* to be free, to being a slave?—to walk without, rather than with a chain?—the *meum* to the *tuum*?—the possession of thirty acres of ground, to dribbling out their life and spirit on land where some of their honours are, to be fed and to pace brethren with the cattle?—to go through the streets of Monrovia respected, to being almost kicked and spit upon by the high-mettled republican of America, who has all the genius and worth associated with a white skin, and who is philosopher enough to despise the *name* of a lord as heartily as he does that meanest

* But would the Slave prefer going to Liberia to staying in America, his home?—and to start abreast with members in society of his own standing, to have all laws and taxes against him blotted out, and to seeing the charities of his former master and enemy melting about him in general good will? Add to these all the advantages of such a land as America. Ask the Slave, if he would prefer any Liberia to this?—and if he hesitate—if he have no attachment to his birth-place, where for the most part his parents and friends lived and died, then take him to Liberia, to battle his way through life among the beasts and savages and sands and antiquities of a country, which must have through his mind some secret chord of which I know not.

of things, a black man? Power and prosperity every where make Tories, and the want of them makes Whigs. America has as many Tories (i. e. a selfish, power-loving, covetous, testy, abuse-loving antiquarian) as England. Alas, for the Blacks! they are always among the Whigs in America, and I fear will be sad Tories in Liberia.

VII. It savours not of the soundness of this Society that its agent (Mr. Cresson) in this country, and all the highly-seasoned damsels of sentiment in our boarding-schools, together with every feverish candidate for public notoriety, on whom Mr. Cresson's doctrines make impression, proclaim war with our own Anti-Slavery Society, the charges preferred against which we ought to know as much about as any stranger. And we cannot help thinking, that Mr. C. is not likely to get correct information from the party to which he first of all advances, placating it with titles of philosophical, benevolent, solid, highly respectable, &c., except, by reversing the meaning of the adage, he expects *ab inimicis discere*. Whether he intends it or not, it is plain those *devout* wights, the Slavers and their friends, consider him akin to them, and no hot-brained plotter against the long-established interests of property, no vulgar declaimer of that old-fashioned doctrine, that man has a right to his own body.

The *primum mobile* of this colonization scheme is this: the Blacks, the free altogether, and the Slaves above a certain number; and rather than not accomplish the project, the whole must be removed from the States. Policy, fear, pride, and covetousness unite to require their expulsion. They blister the sides of those delicately-tasted creatures, the Kentuckians, whose self-descriptions place them at the head of autobiographers. The removal of the Blacks is plainly more a political than a religious object; and to achieve it with less moral resistance from the good in America and elsewhere, and without trouble to the State, it is made to borrow the front (as ladies call their borrowed hair) of philanthropy. The philanthropists are of two classes: those who, to do some good, make no scruple in doing its equal of evil; and those whose compassion for misery is so excessive, as to submerge their understanding when a scheme is proposed for bettering humanity. Of these amiable people America contains its thousands, and England its ten thousands. And if such can be induced here to flank these Liberian Colonizers to the depth of several thousand annual subscribers, how will the wily American politician shrug with sneering satisfaction as these Black Arcadians are well-wished and complimented out of the port, and, much as usual, at the expense of that easy-hearted gentlewoman Dame England!

The very same policy the American would practise towards that nation of children the Indians, if they had less milk and more

mettle in their nature. If they were to strip off their savageness, and throw their feathers and scalping-knives to the wind, and set heartily about their own improvement,—imitating the Americans in all that is good, and by their numerical and constitutional improvement bid fair to become more millions than they are now thousands,—the far-seeing American (we mean only where the light beams from gold) would devise some Monrovia to which he would, with philanthropic airs, woo “the last of the Mohicans” from shores where his ancestors had bounded in the wild dance, or in the hardy hunt, for unnumbered ages, and thus terminate the existence of “three distinct races on the American continent,” which, as the American statesmen say, “will never coalesce.” If Mr. Cresson should say, all this comes from the books of Stewart, Cropper, Garrison, and Co., he is deceived. We never read a line of any publications, except those which appear to be in favour of the Liberian scheme. But truth at times makes every thing contribute to its service: and whether we read the Report of this Colonization Society; its speeches here or in New-York; a letter from the Hon. H. Clay, or an epistle from Liberia; the North American Magazine, or Madame Trollope’s slap-dash,—all conspire to force upon us the conviction, that this is a scheme, in achieving which the Americans ought to be left to themselves. It may be only one of the auxiliary plans of state ambition,—an outwork which is intended to cover other designs,—a feeler whose roots may radicate towards the Canadas and the West Indies; in fine, a part of the machinery by which the Americans are securing a monopoly to the republican power through that continent. Do we denounce such a scheme? Nay. Yet, if such it be, let it be fairly done. They may have as good a right, and do more good by its possession, than as it is now occupied. But let not our right hand be made to smite itself; nor our funds carried to America, to work ultimately to the greater consolidation of its power. Let us rather cease to do evil: our names and influence are already too hateful to the Black Family of man. We have too often subscribed to nostrums,—we have always been among the first to go upon any good-natured, though silly, crusade. Let us give no further sanction to this colonization scheme, although it be even subscribed to by our Wilberforce and Clarkson, who are almost oracular on questions of Slavery, I admit, but as liable as the rest of us to err; nay, more so—for, from their general goodness and commiseration for the Africans, their charity may, in its eagerness to run, get the start of justice. Some ask, if the Society were not all correct, would Mr. Cresson, a gentleman (and most respectable and kind-hearted he is) of fortune, advocate at his own expense its claims? Would you like to be demanded to believe the doctrines of the

amiable Swedenborg, because he spent a fortune in their publication? Is spending a fortune a proof of truth? Then would gamblers have the greatest proofs of it being on their side. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." "Try the spirits of men." —Burns says,

"Keek 'em through."

But if you will listen to your own consciences and understandings, and ask a few questions from any one who knows the feelings of the Americans about the Blacks, you will have better advice. *Si non his utere.* Finally, let it not be said, we are churlish, and care nothing for the Blacks: let those who would so charge us think and write and speak and feel and pray as much in their favour as we have done, and then charge us with this crime. We wish their happiness,—the liberation of the American Slaves; ah! their everlasting separation from the midst of American society. But let the piety, the talent, the industry, the self-denial, the patriotism, and the brotherly love of which the Blacks are capable, Liberia being the judge, be located on the western coast of America, and all will be right.

In conclusion, let these reasons weigh well with all our countrymen: with those who really think, and are therefore more likely to be efficiently benevolent, they will. If we must support an African asylum,—if the shores of that now savage, yet most renowned country, must have on them an elysium for its kidnapped children,—let it be one of our own formation. Let us have a depôt a little nearer than Washington, and a secretary a little more known here than Mr. R. R. Gurney. Let us lay out our charities where we can controul them if abused, and discontinue them when superfluous; a scheme which will have two advantages,—we shall know that we are aiming *simply* at doing good to the Slave, without jostling our benevolence with our merchandize; and we should prove our wish to repair injuries, which we hope God and Africa will not impute to us.